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Operational activities for development

Report of the Second Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Uladzimir **Gerus** (Belarus)

I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 15 September 1998, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled: "Operational activities for development" and to allocate it to the Second Committee.

2. The Second Committee considered the item at its 12th to 15th, 17th, 19th, 36th and 42nd meetings, from 14 to 16 and on 20 and 21 October, 10 November and 1 December 1998. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/53/SR.12–15, 17, 19, 36 and 42). Attention is also drawn to the general debate held by the Committee at its 3rd to 7th meetings, on 6, 8 and 9 October (see A/C.2/53/SR.3–7).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of the World Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children (A/53/186);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/53/226 and Add.1–4);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Fellowships in the United Nations system" (A/53/154) and the comments thereon of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (A/53/154/Add.1);

(d) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (A/53/363);

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(e) Letter dated 9 March 1998 from the Permanent Representatives of Japan and Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Co-Chairmen's summary report on the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held at Dakar on 2 and 3 March 1998 (A/53/85);

(f) Letter dated 27 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Tokyo Agenda for Action adopted at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held at Tokyo from 19 to 21 October 1998 (A/53/559).

4. At the 12th meeting, on 14 October, introductory statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, the Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries of the United Nations Development Programme, the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and an Inspector from the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/C.2/53/SR.12).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/53/L.8 and A/C.2/53/L.56

5. At the 17th meeting, on 20 October, the representative of *Indonesia*, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and *China*, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system" (A/C.2/53/L.8), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989, 47/199 of 22 December 1992, 50/120 of 20 December 1995 and 52/203 of 18 December 1997, as well as other relevant resolutions,

"*Reaffirming* that operational activities for development within the United Nations system have a critical and unique role to play in enabling developing countries to continue to take a leading role in the management of their own development process,

"*Stressing* that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development within the United Nations system and that programmes should be based on such development plans and priorities and should therefore be country-driven,

"*Bearing in mind* that the effectiveness of operational activities should be measured by their impact on the sustained economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries,

"*Stressing*, in that context, the need to take into account the outcomes and commitments of relevant United Nations conferences, as well as the individual mandates and complementarities of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication,

"*Stressing also* that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be, *inter alia*, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond

to the needs of developing countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities of the United Nations system are carried out for the benef.t of the developing countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development,

"*Recognizing* the urgent and specific needs of the low-income countries, in particular the least developed countries,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

"2. *Reaffirms* its resolutions 47/199 and 50/120, and stresses the need to implement fully all the elements of those resolutions in a coherent manner, keeping in mind their interlinkages;

"3. *Endorses* Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/42 of 31 July 1998 on overall guidance on operational activities for development to the United Nations funds and programmes;

"4. *Stresses* that the needs and priorities of recipient countries require increasing the flexibility and decentralization of operational activities to the country level;

"5. *Notes with regret* that, although significant progress has already been made on the restructuring and rationalization of the governance and functioning of the United Nations development funds and programmes, there has not been, as part of the overall reform process, any increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis;

"6. *Strongly reaffirms* that the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the operational activities of the United Nations system must be enhanced by, *inter alia*, a substantial increase in their funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, as well as through the full implementation of resolutions 47/199, 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and 50/120;

"7. *Notes* the urgency of a productive outcome of the continuing discussions in the context of the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to reverse the declining trend in core resources and to put the funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis commensurate with the needs of the developing countries, and, in this context, invites the Economic and Social Council to review the overall financial picture of the funds and programmes annually, in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996;

"8. *Urges* developed countries, in particular those countries whose overall performance is not commensurate with their capacity, taking into account established official development assistance targets, including targets established at the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries and their current levels of contribution, to increase substantially their official development assistance, including contributions to the operational activities of the United Nations system;

"9. *Notes with appreciation* the sustained contributions of many donors and recipient countries to the operational activities for development in a spirit of partnership;

"10. *Expresses serious concern* at the persistent insufficiency of resources for the operational development activities of the United Nations, in particular the decline in contributions to core resources, and the need to urgently reverse this trend;

"11. *Reaffirms* the need for priority allocation of scarce grant resources to programmes and projects in low-income countries, particularly the least developed countries;

"12. *Emphasizes* that recipient Governments have the primary responsibility for coordinating, on the basis of national strategies and priorities, all types of external assistance, including that provided by multilateral organizations, in order to integrate effectively such assistance into their development process;

"13. *Stresses* that the reform of the United Nations should respect the distinct mandates of the separate sectoral and specialized entities, funds, programmes and specialized agencies, taking into account their complementarities;

"14. *Emphasizes* that the pilot phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework should promote a country-driven, coherent response by the United Nations system to achieve greater impact at the country level, in conformity with and in support of national priorities as expressed in the country strategy notes or relevant national development plans, as appropriate;

"15. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring full Government participation in and full ownership of the formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and its approval by the recipient Government concerned, bearing in mind that the responsibility for coordination of all assistance and developmental activities rest with the national government;

"16. *Notes* that the country strategy note remains a voluntary initiative and that where it does not exist, other similar frameworks reflecting national priorities should be used as the basis for the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to ensure that Framework fully responds to the priorities and needs of the Government;

"17. *Stresses* the growing need for incorporating the regional and subregional dimension, as appropriate, in the United Nations operational activities for development, and encourages the resident coordinators, in close consultation with Governments, to secure greater involvement of the regional commissions in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as appropriate;

"18. *Urges* the United Nations Development Group to work in a fully transparent and accountable manner towards a more coherent United Nations performance in the development field, while respecting the specific mandates and identities of its members under the coordination of government;

"19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make the resident coordinator system more participatory in its functioning at the field level by, *inter alia*, making greater use of thematic groups and adopting a more consultative approach within the United Nations system;

"20. *Notes* the improvements in the functioning of the resident coordinator system, and encourages further progress, in close consultation with national Governments, by continuing to broaden the base of recruitment of resident coordinators and improving selection criteria and procedures, including through the use of competency assessment and training and by ensuring that the resident

coordinators take fully into account the mandates of all organizations of the United Nations development system;

"21. *Invites* the United Nations system, including the funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the Secretariat, to provide, as appropriate, support to the resident coordinator system;

"22. *Reaffirms* that resident coordinators, in full consultation with national Governments, should facilitate a coherent and coordinated United Nations follow-up to major international conferences at the field level;

"23. *Stresses* that the resident coordinator system, where requested by host Governments, use the field level committee and thematic working groups to promote better integration of the United Nations operational activities in national development efforts;

"24. *Notes* the current initiatives in pursuing common premises, including by taking cost-benefit studies as called for by relevant resolutions, and encourages further implementation of such initiatives, where appropriate, while ensuring that there will be no additional burden on host countries;

"25. *Calls for* further simplification and harmonization of the rules of procedure used by the United Nations development system in its operational activities, in particular by the promotion of greater consistency in the presentation of budgets at the headquarters level, as well as in the sharing of administrative systems and services, the rationalization of existing procedures in the field, where possible, and in the development of common databases, in consultation with national Governments;

"26. *Decides* that the objective of capacity-building and its sustainability should continue to be an essential part of the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, with the aim of integrating activities and providing support to efforts to strengthen national capacities in the fields of, *inter alia*, policy and programme formulation, development management, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and review;

"27. *Also decides* that, where Governments so desire, the United Nations system should be ready to engage in providing an enabling environment to strengthen the capacity of civil societies and national non-governmental organizations involved in development activities, in accordance with national policies and priorities;

"28. *Further decides* that the United Nations system should use, to the fullest extent possible, available national expertise and endogenous technologies in the implementation of operational activities;

"29. *Calls for* further work on the development of common guidelines at the field level for the recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel, including national consultants, in the formulation and implementation of development projects and programmes supported by the United Nations development system to enhance the coherence of the system;

"30. *Notes* the report on pilot evaluation conducted on the impact of operational activities and the need for full and effective involvement of the recipient Governments concerned in the process of such evaluation, and decides that the United Nations development system should continue to work on promoting the operationalization of capacity-building concepts, as well as on ways of enhancing the sustainability of capacity-building, including through country programming frameworks;

"31. *Also notes* that capacity-building should be explicitly articulated as a goal of all technical assistance provided by the United Nations system and should be conceived of not only as human resources training, but also to include the development of individual organizations and the improvement of the environment in which they operate;

"32. *Decides* that the members of the United Nations Development Group should continue to work on promoting and expanding national execution, including through the simplification of relevant procedures so as to contribute to the advancement of national ownership;

"33. *Requests* the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to undertake efforts in the context of national execution and capacity-building to enhance the absorptive capacity in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries and Africa, and to assist similar efforts undertaken by those countries;

"34. *Stresses* that South-South cooperation (economic cooperation among developing countries/technical cooperation among developing countries) offers viable opportunities for the development of developing countries, and invites all United Nations entities to mainstream economic and technical cooperation among developing countries in their development activities, *inter alia*, through increased allocation of resources from their regular budgets and through incorporating economic and technical cooperation among developing countries modalities into United Nations development projects whenever possible;

"35. *Notes* with satisfaction the broad-based support for technical cooperation among developing countries expressed by member States at the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action;

"36. *Welcomes* the proposal on a United Nations day for South-South cooperation, as well as the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the integration of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries in the operational activities of the United Nations (A/53/226/Add.4) and his report on the revised guidelines on technical cooperation among developing countries (E/1997/110);

"37. *Requests* the United Nations Development Programme, in this context, to substantially increase the allocation of core resources to enable the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries to carry out the General Assembly mandates in promoting technical cooperation among developing countries without affecting the allocation of resources for national programmes;

"38. *Urges* all funds and programmes to increase the procurement of goods and services from developing countries, both as a mechanism for promoting South-South cooperation and enhancing national execution;

"39. *Emphasizes* the importance of disseminating the experience of effective and efficient cooperation within the United Nations development system, and urges the United Nations system to give support to such activities, *inter alia*, through interregional projects for technical cooperation;

"40. *Recognizes* that the monitoring and evaluation process of operational activities, including joint evaluations, should continue to be nationally led, and that the United Nations system should therefore support, where requested by Governments, the strengthening of national evaluation capacities;

"41. *Emphasizes* that further steps need to be taken to evaluate the results and impact of the operational activities for development, in consultation with Governments, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of operational activities;

"42. *Recognizes*, in that context, the need to strengthen capacities of the recipient countries to perform both effective programme, project and financial monitoring and impact evaluations of operational activities funded by the United Nations;

"43. *Underlines* the importance of promoting, under the leadership of Governments, greater collaboration on issues relating to evaluation among recipient Governments, the United Nations Development Group and relevant development partners at the country level;

"44. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations development system to ensure gender balance when making appointments, including at the senior level and in the field, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions;

"45. *Stresses* the need for gender mainstreaming in operational activities of the United Nations system, in particular in support of poverty eradication and in ensuring availability of funding sources for such programmes;

"46. *Also stresses* the important role of the Economic and Social Council in ensuring coordination of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, including through overall guidance for that purpose to all funds and programmes;

"47. *Notes* that the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes should ensure that the heads of these funds and programmes include in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council, prepared in accordance with Council resolution 1994/33, a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned, with emphasis on issues arising from the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform programme, the triennial policy review and the follow-up to the conferences, so as to allow the Council to fulfil its coordinating role;

"48. *Requests* the Secretary-General to pursue his initiative to strengthen the coordination arrangements at the regional level in pursuance of the measures outlined in annex III, part B of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, and, in that context, encourages the regional commissions to exercise a team leadership role, in particular by promoting inter-agency cooperative relationships at the regional level;

"49. *Encourages* greater cooperation between World Bank and all funds and programmes, with a view to increased complementarity and better cooperation in their activities, building on the existing arrangements and fully in accordance with the priorities of the recipient Government;

"50. *Calls upon* the United Nations system, in implementing the present resolution, to bear in mind the specific requirements of the continuum from humanitarian assistance through rehabilitation to development, while ensuring that scarce resources for development are not diverted to humanitarian assistance and that sufficient additional resources for humanitarian assistance are made available by the international community;

"51. *Requests* the Secretary-General, after consultations with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to present a report

to the General Assembly for its consideration at its fifty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999, on an appropriate management process, containing clear guidelines, targets, benchmarks and time-frames for the full implementation of the present resolution;

"52. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council, during the operational activities segment of its substantive sessions of 1999 and 2000, to examine the operational activities of the United Nations system with a view to ensuring the full implementation of the present resolution;

"53. *Reaffirms* that the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should take appropriate action for the full implementation of the present resolution, and requests the executive heads of those funds, programmes and specialized agencies, bearing in mind paragraph 41 above, to submit a yearly progress report to their governing bodies on measures taken and envisaged for the implementation of the present resolution, as well as appropriate recommendations;

"54. *Decides*, as an integral part of the next comprehensive triennial policy review, in consultation with Member States, to conduct an evaluation of the impact of the pilot phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in the field of operational activities, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report containing information on progress in that regard to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly for its consideration through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999;

"55. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the present resolution in the context of the triennial policy review, and to make appropriate recommendations."

6. At the 42nd meeting, on 1 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, David Prendergast (Jamaica), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system" (A/C.2/53/L.56), submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.8, and orally revised it as follows:

(a) In the first preambular paragraph, the words "Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/26 of 28 July 1998" were replaced with the words "Economic and Social Council resolutions 1996/42 of 26 July 1996 and 1998/26 of 28 July 1998";

(b) In operative paragraph 16, the words "*inter alia*" were inserted before the words "the decisions adopted recently by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund";

(c) In operative paragraph 25, the words "in particular" before the words "through the United Nations Development Group" were replaced with the word "including", and the word "by" was deleted before the words "increasing the number of women resident coordinators";

(d) Operative paragraph 34, which had read:

"34. *Emphasizes* the need to implement the outcome of the major United Nations conferences through the commitment and targets agreed at these conferences, and in this context stresses the importance to accelerate efforts for the coordinated follow-up of major conferences, welcomes Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/290, in which the Council decided on a step-by-step basis an intergovernmental

process on relevant indicators to monitor the implementation of conference outcomes at all levels, and welcomes the decision to hold an informal Council meeting on this issue in 1999",

was replaced with the following text:

"34. *Emphasizes* the need to implement the outcome of the major United Nations conferences through fulfilling the commitments and targets agreed at those conferences, and in this context stresses the importance to accelerate efforts for the coordinated follow-up of major United Nations conferences, and in this context welcomes Economic and Social Council decision 1998/290 of 31 July 1998, in which the Council decided on a step-by-step basis an intergovernmental process on relevant indicators to monitor the implementation of conference outcomes at all levels, and welcomes in this context also the decision to hold an informal Council meeting on this issue in 1999".

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.56, as orally revised (see para. 13, draft resolution I).

8. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.56, draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.8 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.9

9. At the 19th meeting, on 21 October, the representative of *Sweden* introduced a draft resolution entitled "Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2001 to review the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children" (A/C.2/53/L.9).

10. At the 36th meeting, on 10 November, the Vice-President of the Committee, David Prendergast (Jamaica), informed the Committee of the outcome of the informal consultations held on the draft resolution.

11. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/53/L.9 (see para. 13, draft resolution II).

C. Draft decision

12. At its 42nd meeting, on 1 December, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/53/226 and Add. 1–4), the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Fellowships in the United Nations system" (A/53/154) and the comments thereon of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (A/53/154/Add.1), and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (A/53/363) (see para. 14).

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

13. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

Triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989, 47/199 of 22 December 1992, 50/120 of 20 December 1995, 52/203 of 18 December 1997, and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, and taking into account the views of Member States, as well as Economic and Social Council resolutions 1996/42 of 26 July 1996 and 1998/26 of 28 July 1998,

Reaffirming that operational activities for development within the United Nations system have an important role to play in enabling developing countries to continue to take a lead role in the management of their own development process,

Stressing that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development within the United Nations system, and that programmes should be based on such development plans and priorities and should therefore be country-driven,

Also stressing, in that context, the need to take into account the outcomes and commitments of relevant United Nations conferences, as well as the individual mandates and complementarities of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication,

Further stressing that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be, *inter alia*, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of developing countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities of the United Nations system are carried out for the benefit of recipient countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development,

Noting, in this context, the activities of United Nations funds and programmes aimed at providing technical assistance to recipient countries, in response to their national economic and social needs and priorities, including poverty eradication, promotion of all human rights, including the right to development, for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and recent United Nations conferences, and stressing the need for these activities to be undertaken at the request of interested recipient Governments strictly within the respective mandates of United Nations funds and programmes, which should receive increased contributions from donor countries,

Recognizing the urgent and specific needs of the low-income countries, in particular the least developed countries,

Emphasizing that developing countries are responsible for their development processes, and in this context stressing the responsibility of the international community, in partnership, to assist developing countries in their national development efforts,

Recalling also the role of the Economic and Social Council in providing coordination and guidance to the United Nations system to ensure that policies formulated by the General Assembly, particularly during the triennial policy review of operational activities, are implemented on a system-wide basis in accordance with Assembly resolutions 48/162 of 20 December 1993 and 50/227 of 24 May 1996,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;[1]

2. *Reaffirms* its resolutions 47/199, 50/120, and parts relevant to operational activities for development of its resolution 52/12 B, and stresses the need to implement fully, based on lessons learned, all the elements of these resolutions in a coherent and timely manner, keeping in mind their interlinkages;

3. *Emphasizes also* that recipient Governments have the primary responsibility for coordinating, on the basis of national strategies and priorities, all types of external assistance, including that provided by multilateral organizations, in order to integrate effectively such assistance into their development process;

4. *Notes* the efforts made in order to rationalize and improve the function and impact of the United Nations funds and programmes;

I.A

Reform of United Nations operational activities

5. *Stresses* the need for all organizations of the United Nations development system to focus their efforts at the field level on priority areas, in accordance with the priorities identified by recipient countries and the mandates, mission statements and relevant decisions of their governing bodies, in order to avoid duplication and enhance the complementarity and impact of their work;

6. *Further stresses* that, in the context of the reform of the United Nations Secretariat and the restructuring and revitalization of the intergovernmental process, the mandates of the separate sectoral and specialized entities, funds, programmes and specialized agencies should be respected and enhanced, taking into account their complementarities;

I.B

Funding for United Nations operational activities

7. *Notes with regret* that although significant progress has already been achieved on the governance and functioning of the United Nations development funds and programmes, there has not been, as part of this overall change process, any increase in core resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis;

8. *Expresses serious concern* at the persistent insufficiency of resources for the operational development activities of the United Nations, in particular the decline in contributions to core resources;

9. *Reaffirms* the need for priority allocation of scarce grant resources to programmes and projects in low-income countries, particularly the least developed countries;

[1] A/53/226 and Add.1–4.

10. *Strongly reaffirms* that the impact of the operational activities of the United Nations system must be enhanced by, *inter alia*, a substantial increase in their funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries, as well as through the full implementation of its resolutions 47/199, 48/162, 50/120 and parts relevant to operational activities for development of its resolution 52/12 B;

11. *Stresses* the need for a continuous overall improvement in the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the United Nations system in delivering its development assistance, and welcomes steps that have been taken towards that end;

12. *Notes with appreciation* the sustained contributions of many donors and recipient countries to operational activities for development in a spirit of partnership;

13. *Urges* developed countries, in particular those countries whose overall performance is not commensurate with their capacity, taking into account established official development assistance targets, including targets established at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and their current levels of contribution, to increase substantially their official development assistance, including contributions to the operational activities of the United Nations system;

14. *Stresses* that other countries that are in a position to do so should strive to augment their assistance in the framework of development cooperation;

15. *Notes* the importance of non-core resources, including cost-sharing, trust funds and non-traditional sources of financing, as a mechanism to enhance the capacity and to supplement the means of operational activities for development;

16. *Notes* the discussions on funding strategies in the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes, including, *inter alia*, the decisions adopted recently by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund as part of ongoing efforts by Member States to reverse the declining trend in core resources and to put funding for United Nations development activities on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the needs of the developing countries, and in this context urges the expeditious and productive outcome of these and other executive board discussions, and invites the Economic and Social Council to consider, on an annual basis, the overall financial picture of the funds and programmes;

I.C

United Nations Development Assistance Framework

17. *Emphasizes* that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is currently in a pilot phase, should promote a country-driven, collaborative and coherent response by the United Nations system to achieve greater impact at the country level, fully consistent with and in support of national priorities as expressed in the country strategy notes or relevant national development plans, as appropriate;

18. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring full government participation in the formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and its full ownership through the agreement of the recipient Governments concerned to the finalized Framework, bearing in mind that the responsibility for coordination of all assistance and developmental activities rests with the national Government;

19. *Stresses also* the need to ensure the full and active participation of the funds and programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

20. *Notes* the importance of closer consultation in the formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework between national Governments, relevant United Nations development agencies, including specialized agencies, and other relevant development partners;

21. *Notes* that the country strategy note remains a voluntary initiative and that where it does not exist, other similar frameworks reflecting national priorities should be used as the basis for the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, to ensure that the Framework fully responds to national development priorities and needs;

22. *Notes* the role that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework should play to facilitate, *inter alia*, the United Nations contribution to the coordinated follow-up of the major United Nations conferences at the field level, and the importance of the common country assessment for the effective formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

I.D

Resident coordinator system

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to make the resident coordinator system more participatory in its functioning at the field level by, *inter alia*, making greater use of thematic groups and adopting a more consultative approach within the United Nations system;

24. *Notes* the improvements in the functioning of the resident coordinator system, and encourages further progress, in close consultation with national Governments;

25. *Encourages* further efforts, including through the United Nations Development Group, to further improve the resident coordinator system, and welcomes the efforts to continue to broaden the base of recruitment of resident coordinators, increasing the number of women resident coordinators, and improving its selection criteria and procedures, including through the use of competency assessment and training and by ensuring that the resident coordinators take fully into account the mandates of all organizations of the resident coordinator system;

26. *Reaffirms* that resident coordinators, in full consultation with national Governments, should facilitate a coherent and coordinated United Nations follow-up to major international conferences at the field level;

27. *Requests* the United Nations system, including the funds and programmes, specialized agencies and the Secretariat, to provide support to the resident coordinator system;

I.E

United Nations Development Group

28. *Urges* the United Nations Development Group to work in a fully transparent and accountable manner towards a more coherent United Nations performance in the development field, while respecting the specific mandates and identity of its members;

II.A

Planning, programming and implementation

29. *Stresses* that the needs and priorities of recipient countries require flexibility and decentralization of operational activities to the country level, as well as the continued application of these measures to further enhance programme responsiveness and impact;

30. *Decides* that with the agreement of the host country, the United Nations development system should assist national Governments in creating an enabling environment in which the links between national Governments, the United Nations development system, civil society, national non-governmental organizations and the private sector that are involved in the development process are strengthened with a view to seeking new and innovative solutions to development problems in accordance with national policies and priorities;

31. *Calls* for the further simplification, harmonization and rationalization of procedures for operational activities of the United Nations development system at the field level, where possible, and developing common databases, in consultation with national Governments;

32. *Urges* the funds and programmes to put in place specific measures and timetables to advance the simplification and harmonization of procedures, and to report on these to their respective governing bodies;

33. *Also calls* for the United Nations development system to promote greater consistency in the presentation of budgets at the headquarters level, and, at the field level, the sharing of administrative systems and services;

34. *Emphasizes* the need to implement the outcome of the major United Nations conferences through fulfilling the commitments and targets agreed at those conferences, and in this context stresses the importance to accelerate efforts for the coordinated follow-up of major United Nations conferences, and in this context welcomes Economic and Social Council decision 1998/290 of 31 July 1998, in which the Council decided on a step-by-step basis an intergovernmental process on relevant indicators to monitor the implementation of conference outcomes at all levels, and in this context also welcomes the decision to hold an informal Council meeting on this issue in 1999;

35. *Encourages* greater cooperation between the World Bank, regional development banks and all funds and programmes with a view to increased complementarity and better division of labour, as well as enhanced coherence in their sectoral activities, building on the existing arrangements and fully in accordance with the priorities of the recipient Government;

36. *Notes* the current initiatives in pursuing common premises and the need to take fully into account cost-benefit studies as called for by relevant resolutions, and encourages further implementation of such initiatives, where appropriate, while ensuring that there will be no additional burden imposed on host countries;

II.B

Capacity-building

37. *Reaffirms* that capacity-building and its sustainability should be explicitly articulated as a goal of technical assistance provided by the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, with the aim of strengthening national capacities

in the fields of, *inter alia*, policy and programme formulation, development management, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and review;

II.C

Humanitarian assistance

38. *Expresses* concern at the growing number of natural disasters and environmental emergencies which often strike countries that lack the resources to cope with them adequately;

39. *Recognizes* that the phases of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development are generally not consecutive but often overlap and occur simultaneously, and notes the urgent need to develop, through a strategic framework, when appropriate, a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis, and that the development of such a comprehensive approach must involve national authorities, as well as the United Nations system, donors and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and that national authorities must take a leading role in all aspects of the recovery plan, and also notes in this context the need for an early application of developmental tools in humanitarian emergencies, and takes note with appreciation of the recommendations included in the report of the Secretary-General in this regard;

40. *Stresses* that contributions to humanitarian assistance should not be provided at the expense of development assistance, and that sufficient resources for humanitarian assistance should be made available by the international community;

II.D

Regional dimension

41. *Stresses* the growing need for incorporating the regional and subregional dimension in United Nations operational activities for development, and encourages the resident coordinators, in close consultation with Governments, to secure greater involvement of the regional commissions, taking into account their agreed mandates and work programmes, in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as appropriate;

II.E

Cross-cutting themes

II.E.1

South-South cooperation/technical and economic cooperation among developing countries

42. *Requests* the United Nations system to take appropriate measures to improve the effective incorporation of technical cooperation among developing countries into their programmes and projects, and to intensify efforts towards mainstreaming the modality of technical cooperation among developing countries, including through support to the activities of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, and encourages other relevant international institutions to undertake similar measures;

43. *Stresses* that South-South cooperation, including technical and economic cooperation among developing countries, offers viable opportunities for the development of developing countries, and in this context requests the executive boards of the funds and

programmes to review, with a view to considering an increase, the allocation of resources for technical cooperation among developing countries activities;

44. *Notes* with satisfaction the broad-based support for technical cooperation among developing countries expressed by Member States at the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries;[2]

45. *Takes note with appreciation* of the recommendations on strengthening the integration of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries contained in the report of the Secretary-General;

II.E.2

Gender

46. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations development system to take all measures to ensure gender balance when making appointments, including at the senior level and in the field, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions;

47. *Stresses* the need for gender mainstreaming in operational activities of the United Nations system in all fields, in particular in support of poverty eradication;

II.E.3

National execution

48. *Further decides* that the United Nations system should use to the fullest extent possible and practicable available national expertise and indigenous technologies in the implementation of operational activities;

49. *Calls upon* all funds and programmes to consider ways to increase, within existing rules and regulations, the procurement of goods and services from developing countries, both as a mechanism to promote South-South cooperation and for enhancing national execution;

50. *Calls* for further work on the development of common guidelines at the field level for the recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel, including national consultants, in the formulation and implementation of development projects and programmes supported by the United Nations development system in order to enhance the coherence of the system;

51. *Requests* the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to continue to work on promoting, improving and expanding national execution, including through the simplification and strengthening of relevant procedures, so as to contribute to the advancement of national ownership and to enhance the absorptive capacity in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries in Africa;

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August–12 September 1978* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E. 78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.

III

Monitoring and evaluation

52. *Recognizes* that the monitoring and evaluation process of operational activities, including joint evaluations, should be impartial and independent, under the overall leadership of the Government;

53. *Notes* the report on pilot evaluation conducted on the impact of operational activities and the need to continue these evaluations with the full and effective involvement of the recipient Government concerned in the process of such evaluation;

54. *Emphasizes* the importance of disseminating the experience of effective and efficient cooperation within the United Nations development system;

55. *Underlines* the importance of promoting, under the leadership of Governments, greater collaboration on issues relating to evaluation among recipient Governments, the United Nations development system, in particular the members of the United Nations Development Group, and relevant development partners at the country level;

56. *Recognizes*, in that context, the need to strengthen capacities of the recipient countries to perform both effective programme, project and financial monitoring and impact evaluations of operational activities funded by the United Nations;

57. *Further requests* that the United Nations system strengthen its efforts, in consultation with recipient countries, to ensure that the lessons learned from both monitoring and evaluation exercises are systematically applied into programming processes at the operational level and that evaluation criteria are built into all projects and programmes at their design stage;

IV

Follow-up

58. *Reaffirms* that the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should take appropriate action for the full implementation of the present resolution, and requests the executive heads of those funds, programmes and specialized agencies to submit a yearly progress report to their governing bodies on measures taken and envisaged for the implementation of the present resolution, as well as appropriate recommendations;

59. *Invites* the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to ensure that the heads of these funds and programmes include in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council, prepared in accordance with Council resolution 1994/33 of 28 July 1994, a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned, with emphasis on issues arising from the implementation of the Secretary-General's reform programme, the triennial policy review and the follow-up to international conferences, so as to allow the Council to fulfil its coordinating role;

60. *Requests* the Secretary-General, after consultation with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to present a progress report to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 1999, on an appropriate management process, containing clear guidelines, targets, benchmarks and time-frames for the full implementation of the present resolution;

61. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council, during the operational activities segment of its substantive sessions of 1999 and 2000, to examine the operational activities

of the United Nations system in order to evaluate the implementation of the present resolution with a view to ensuring its full implementation;

62. *Further invites* the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 1999, to consider, *inter alia*, the issues of poverty eradication and capacity-building, and at its substantive session of 2000, to consider, *inter alia*, harmonization and simplification, including of programming, and resources, on the basis of progress reports by the Secretary-General, including appropriate recommendations;

63. *Decides*, as an integral part of the next triennial policy review of operational activities, in consultation with Member States, to conduct an evaluation of the impact of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in the field of operational activities, and requests the Secretary-General to report, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2001, on the results of such an evaluation, including lessons learned and recommendations made, for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, and also requests the Secretary-General to report annually to the Economic and Social Council on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

64. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the present resolution in the context of the triennial policy review, and to make appropriate recommendations.

Draft resolution II

Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2001 to review the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 51/186 of 16 December 1996,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of the World Declaration and the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children;[3]

2. *Decides* to postpone to its fifty-fourth session consideration of the arrangements for the special session of the General Assembly in 2001 to review the achievement of the goals of the Summit.

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14. The Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Documents relating to operational activities for development

The General Assembly takes note of the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;[4]

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Fellowships in the United Nations system";[5]

[3] A/53/186.
[4] A/53/226.
[5] A/53/154.

(c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Fellowships in the United Nations system";[6]

(d) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women.[7]

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[6] A/53/154/Add.1.

[7] A/53/363.